United Nations

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/1448
3 August 1993

TUESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Secretary-General writes to United States Secretary of State explaining basic United Nations positions on use of air power in Bosnia and Herzegovina; supports view that air strikes could help achieve aims of Security Council resolutions; NATO draws up "operational options".

+ Terrorist incidents in Cambodia increase as UNTAC troop withdrawal begins.

+ Presidents of Serbia, Montenegro and Croatia to rejoin Bosnia and Herzegovina peace talks tonight; spokesman says settlement is possible, but only if Bosnian President and Bosnian Serb and Bosnian Croat leaders resume negotiations.

+ Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in former Yugoslavia asks Croatia to stop expelling Bosnian refugees to Bosnia and Herzegovina; says expulsions seriously violate international human rights standards.

+ Human Rights Committee reviews reports by five States parties to 1976 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights at forty-eighth session; further clarifies article on freedom of thought and belief.

* * *

Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has written to United States Secretary of State Warren Christopher putting forward basic positions regarding the use of air power in Bosnia and Herzegovina, according to a United Nations spokesman. The Secretary-General wanted to have the advice of his Special Representative before authorizing air strikes, as they would effect peace-keeping and humanitarian operations in the Republic, and the peace negotiations in Geneva.

The Secretary-General reiterated that it was his responsibility -- in consultation with the Security Council -- to initiate air strikes, and that military power was to be used for the purpose of promoting implementation of

(more)

For information media--not an official record

relevant Council resolutions, the spokesman said. The Secretary-General supported the view that the use of air power could help to achieve the objectives of those resolutions, and shared the concerns of the United States and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) on the matter.

The Secretary-General had received a very helpful and positive communication from the Secretary-General of NATO reaffirming NATO's support for the negotiations in Geneva, the spokesman continued. NATO was willing to participate in the implementation of a settlement under the authority of the Security Council. It considered the repeated violation of cease-fires to be unacceptable, and was making immediate preparations to take stronger measures. NATO had accordingly tasked its military authorities with drawing up operational options for air strikes, in close coordination with the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR). As soon as the military authorities had reported back to it, the NATO Council would then consider, in consultation with the United Nations, whether military action was necessary.

* * *

There has been a disturbing increase in terrorist incidents in Cambodia, according to a United Nations spokesman. It coincides with the start of the withdrawal of United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) troops. Half of the Tunisian UNTAC battalion departed yesterday and half of the Uruguayan battalion is to leave tomorrow.

On Sunday, 21 peacekeepers had been forced by soldiers of the National Army of Democratic Kampuchea (NADK) to evacuate their position and cross into Thailand, the spokesman said. Thai military elements had been present at the scene but had not intervened. There had been no casualties, but the NADK soldiers had taken three UNTAC vehicles and had looted the UNTAC base. A thorough investigation into the incident was underway.

Yesterday afternoon, a train travelling from Sihanoukville to Phnom Penh was attacked by a group of 30 unidentified people. The spokesman said 10 passengers reportedly were killed and at least 30 injured. Numerous other incidents of railway track destruction had occurred over the past few weeks, and earlier today mortar rounds were fired in the vicinity of Siem Reap airport.

* * *

President Slobodan Milosevic of Serbia, President Momir Bulatovic of Montenegro and President Franjo Tudjman of Croatia will rejoin the Bosnian peace talks in Geneva tonight, according to a United Nations spokesman. The Co-Chairmen of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia, Thorvald Stoltenberg and Lord Owen, were due to meet privately this evening with the three Presidents, and with President Alija Izetbegovic of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The spokesman expressed the hope that President Izetbegovic, Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic and Bosnian Croat leader Mate Boban would resume

(more)

negotiations tomorrow. He said a peace settlement was possible, but only if those three parties returned to the conference table.

* * *

Tadeusz Mazowiecki, Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in the territory of the former Yugoslavia, has asked Croatia to stop the expulsion of Bosnian refugees to Bosnia and Herzegovina. He said in a letter to Croatian Foreign Minister Mate Granic that the expulsions were a serious violation of international human rights standards.

Mr. Mazowiecki said expulsions appeared to be taking place all over Croatia. On 29 July, for instance, civilian police had arrested a large number of refugees at the Kruga camp in Zagreb, including women. Later that day, the refugees had been transferred to Ljubuski, in Herzegovina. Similar incidents had been reported from refugee camps in Split, Pula, the island of Obonjan and Varazdin. Mr. Mazowiecki went on to say that he was fully aware of the difficulties confronting Croatia in providing such people with adequate protection and help. However, he expressed the hope that the Croatian Government would continue its efforts to offer humanitarian assistance to all refugees and take all measures necessary to prevent further expulsions.

* * *

The powers of the police in Ireland, the length of precautionary detention periods in Hungary and the state of emergency in Egypt were among the issues the Human Rights Committee considered during its forty-eighth session, which concluded in Geneva last week. Reviewing reports by five States, the Committee also expressed concern over the treatment of groups like the Baha'i community in Iran, the Romany or Gypsy people and the Turkish minority in Bulgaria.

The 18-member expert body, which monitors compliance with the 1976 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, further clarified article 18 of the Covenant which deals with freedom of thought, conscience and belief. It also adopted a number of decisions relating to confidential communications from individuals who claim to have had their human rights violated.

* *** *